

IN REPLY, REFER TO:
NCPC File No. MP305

July 2, 2015

The Honorable Mary Hughes Hynes
Chair, Arlington County Board
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 300
Arlington, Virginia 22201

RE: Realize Rosslyn Plan

Dear Chairman Hynes:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Realize Rosslyn Plan (Plan). The comments provided below focus on the National Capital Planning Commission's (NCPC) role as the central planning agency for the federal government in the National Capital Region. While each city and county within the National Capital Region has prepared planning goals to guide future growth and development, together we share a stewardship role for the nation's capital. Federal agencies each have interests in federal lands and operations throughout the National Capital Region, and we protect and enhance the character of the nation's capital by mission. NCPC coordinates all federal planning activities in the region, and has several planning functions: comprehensive planning; project planning; federal project and master plan reviews; and multi-year federal capital improvements planning.

We understand the goals of the Plan are to enhance the unique qualities and character of Rosslyn through good planning and design; and we commend Arlington planning staff's work on this project. Arlington County, including the Rosslyn neighborhood, is a particularly important contributor to the character of the monumental core and its setting, where some of the nation's most important resources are located, including: the US Capitol, the White House, the National Mall, Arlington National Cemetery and George Washington Memorial Parkway. The character of the monumental core – and iconic views to and from this setting – shape how the public experiences our nation's most beloved memorials and public buildings, today and in the future. The Arlington Board recognized the importance of the relationship between the County and the National Mall in the *Resolution of Concern Regarding Building Heights Related to the National Capitol Mall Axis*, which it adopted in 1982.

The Plan asserts the value of reciprocal views to the nation's capital, including the monumental core. We recognize the significance of these visual links and encourage that they are reinforced at the pedestrian-level to further enhance the public experience of the National Capital Region. Furthermore, we commend the Plan's expanded parks and open space program and support the Plan's goals to strengthen the public realm by emphasizing and improving the pedestrian experience.

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We also understand a desire to develop a distinct skyline for Rosslyn in the Plan. The development of the Rosslyn skyline will shape not only the local landscape in Arlington, but also the historic regional landscape of the surrounding environs, including the monumental core. It is important that the design of buildings in Rosslyn, including defining elements such as scale, height, mass, materials and other formal design qualities be sympathetic to these settings.

Additionally, we recommend that Arlington consider matters of visibility related to lighting, illuminated signage, and highly-reflective building materials for potential skyline structures in Rosslyn. We appreciate the existing protections within the County's signage and lighting codes to respect national parklands and open spaces.

We have enjoyed our collaborative working relationship with Arlington staff and look forward to continued engagement on planning work of regional and federal interest. As projects expressed in the Plan are developed further, we encourage coordination with pertinent federal agencies where future development may impact federal lands adjacent to Rosslyn.

The comments discussed above reflect the views of the National Capital Planning Commission staff; and do not represent any official action by the National Capital Planning Commission. Should you have any questions or concerns, please have a member of your staff contact Michael Sherman, Director, Policy & Research Division, 202-482-7254 or michael.sherman@ncpc.gov.

Sincerely,



Marcel Acosta
Executive Director

cc: J. Walter Tejada, Vice-Chair
Jay Fisette, Board Member
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